

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The final Office Action dated May 11, 2010 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 9 and 31 are hereby amended. Claims 13, 14 and 22-28 were previously canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-12, 15-21 and 29-32 are currently pending, of these, claims 1-8 and 15-21 are withdrawn from consideration. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention. *Office Action* at p. 3, ¶ 6. Applicants have amended claim 31 and request that the Office withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 31 and 32.

Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a and e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2004/0187527 to Kim et al. (hereinafter “Kim”). *Office Action* at page 3, ¶ 9. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Independent claim 9 is allowable over the cited reference in that claim 9 recites a combination of elements including, for example, “supplying steam into the tub or drum ... when the intermediate spinning is finished and before filling of water to rinse.” *Kim* does not disclose, expressly or inherently, at least these features of the claimed invention.

Kim discloses washing, rinsing, intermittent dewatering and supplying steam during washing or rinsing. *See Kim* at ¶¶ [0064]-[0066]. *Kim* is entirely silent regarding any disclosure, express or inherent, concerning “supplying steam into the tub or drum ... when the intermediate spinning is finished and before filling of water to rinse,” as recited in independent claim 9. *Kim* discloses that “[t]he aforementioned rinsing and intermittent dewatering processes are alternately and repeatedly carried out.” *Kim* at ¶ [0065]. Therefore, it is clear that *Kim*’s rinsing step is a different step from the intermittent dewatering process. Further, *Kim* only discloses supplying steam during rinsing. As stated, amended claim 9 recites “supplying steam ... when the intermediate spinning is finished and before filling of water to rinse.”

The Office alleges that “[t]he claim language does not exclude having multiple rinse steps wherein steam is also supplied.” *Office Action* at p. 2, ¶ 3. The claim language on its face requires “supplying steam into the tub or drum” when “the intermediate spinning is finished” and “before filling of water to rinse.” As stated above, *Kim* is entirely silent regarding any disclosure, express or inherent, concerning these features.

The temperature of steam used for sterilization is very high. Therefore, if the steam would be applied directly to dry laundry, there is the risk of burning the laundry. On the other hand, if water is stored in the drum or the tub, the temperature of the supplied steam will decrease due to the lower water temperature. In order to sterilize laundry, the amount of supplied steam as well as the steam supplying time would have to be increased. This, however, requires more energy to sterilize the laundry with steam.

The many benefits and advantages of the claimed invention overcome these problems. Because the supplying of steam is performed “when the intermediate spinning step is finished” and “before filling of water to rinse,” the risk of burning the laundry is reduced because the laundry is wet, but lowering the temperature of the steam is also reduced because the steam is introduced “before filling of water to rinse.” Because *Kim* only discloses supplying steam during rinsing, the benefits and advantages of the present invention cannot be obtained. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a and e) rejection of independent claim 9. Claims 10 and 11 depend from independent claim 9. It stands to reason that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a and e) rejection of those dependent claims should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 12, 29 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kim* in view of EP Publication No. 1275767 to Dober et al. (hereinafter “*Dober*”).

Office Action at p. 4, ¶ 8. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

Dober fails to cure the deficiencies of *Kim* with respect to independent claim 9. Indeed, the Office only relied upon *Dober* to purportedly disclose “a method for a washing machine where laundry is washed... spin extracted ... then is steamed to remove the creases resulting from the spin extraction.” *Office Action* at p. 5, ¶ 17. Because none of the cited references, either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of independent claim 9, they also fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claims 12, 29 and 30, which

depend from claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Office to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 12, 29 and 30.

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kim* in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,711,162 to Woelfel (hereinafter “*Woelfel*”). *Office Action* at p. 6, ¶ 23. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

Woelfel fails to cure the deficiencies of *Kim* with respect to independent claim 9. Indeed, the Office only relied upon *Woelfel* to purportedly disclose “[performing] a rinse wherein the rinse is done by successive rinses of warm and cold water.” *Office Action* at p. 5, ¶ 26. Because none of the cited references, either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of independent claim 9, they also fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 31, which depends from claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Office to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 31.

Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kim* in view *Woelfel*, and in further view of U.S. Publication No. 2004/001997 to Goddard et al. (hereinafter “*Goddard*”). *Office Action* at p. 7, ¶ 28. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request reconsideration.

Goddard fails to cure the deficiencies of *Kim* and *Woelfel* with respect to independent claim 9. Indeed, the Office only relied upon *Goddard* to purportedly disclose “a washing machine rinse cycle having three rinse steps, each followed by a spin and drain step.” *Office Action* at p. 7, ¶ 31. Because none of the cited references, either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of independent claim 9, they also fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 32, which depends from claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Office to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 32.

Conclusion

The application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0911.

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Respectfully submitted,

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